

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 271452Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3275
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY
DIA WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
USIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 3364

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY
SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR MAY 28, 1977

1. AL-BAATH IN AN "EXCLUSIVE REPORT" CLAIMED OFFICIAL CONTACTS
BEGAN MAY 26, AMONG VARIOUS LEBANESE PARTIES TO DISCUSS
FORMULA FOR ESTABLISHING "NATIONAL FRONT" IN LEBANON UNDER
PRES. SARKIS WHICH WOULD LAY DOWN "POLITICAL SCHEDULE" FOR
IMPLEMENTING NEW FORMULA FOR LEBANON. FRONT, IT INDICATED,
WOULD PLAY SIGNIFICANT AND LEADING ROLE IN HELPING LEBANON
OUTOF ITS CRISIS. SEPARATE ARTICLE ON MEETING SYRIAN
BAATH PARTY DEP SEC GEN ABDALLAH AL-AHMAR HELD MAY 26
WITH LEBANESE BAATH PARTY LEADER ASAM KANSO AND NATIONAL AND
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PATRIOTIC FRONT LEADER KAMAL SHATILA (ANSSERIST) IMPLIED
THAT THESE WERE TWO OF THE FIGURES SYRIA ENVISIONS
PLAYING MAJOR ROLE WITHIN THE PROPOSED "NATIONAL FRONT."
SHATILA QUOTED AS SAYING THAT HE HOPED HIS ORGANIZATION
WOULD SERVE AS FOCUS "WHERE ALL FORCES REFUSING PARTITION
AND BELIEVING IN UNITY, ARABISM, AND PROGRESS OF LEBANON,
CAN MEET." AHMAR FOR HIS PART STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF

LEBANESE UNITY IN CONFRONTING ISRAEL AND DECLARED THAT
"PARTITION IN LEBANON REQUIRES (CONTINUED) FIGHTING;
STOPPING THE FIGHTING WILL STOP PARTITION, AND WE WILL
NOT REFRAIN FROM PLAYING THIS NATIONAL ROLE IN LEBANON."

2. PRES. CARTER'S REMARKS ON ME DURING HIS MAY 2 PRESS
CONFERENCE RECEIVED FACTUAL COVERAGE, BUT LEAD AL-BAATH
EDITORIAL BY AMID AL-KHULI WARNED AGAINST PRESSURING AND
"BLACKMAILING" THE ARABS. IN COMMENTING ON HIS REMARKS
AL-KHULI WORTE THAT CARTER'S DECLARATION DID NOT IMPLY ANY
CHANGE OR DEVELOPMENT IN THE US POSITION, IN WHICH HE
LISTED MAIN POINTS AS:

--PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO HOMELAND AND COMPENSATION FOR THEIR
LOSSES.

--FULL OR PARTIAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED ARAB
TERRITORIES.

--GUARANTEEING SECURE BORDERS FOR ISRAEL.

--CARTER'S STATEMENT THAT UNLESS BEGIN CHANGES THERE NO
HOPE FOR PEACE.

--REQUEST FOR BOTH PARTIES TO BE MODERATE.

LHULI CLAIMED SOME OF THESE POINTS CONTRADICTORY AND
ASKED: "ISN'T THIS PERSISTENCE ABOUT SECURE BORDERS, IN ITS
GEOGRAPHIC CONCEPT, CLARLY ARBITRARY? HASN'T THIS
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CONCEPT BEEN PROVEN FUTILE MILITARILY AND STRATEGICALLY
TIME AFTER TIME?" HE NOTED THAT PRES. AL-ASSAD HAD
DEFINED SECURE BORDERS AS DEMILITARIZED ZONES ON BOTH
SIDES OF THE BORDER.

3. AL-KHULI ASSERTED: "THERE IS NO HARM IF AMERICAN
GUARANTEES ANY KIND OF PROTECTION IT WISHES FOR ISRAEL
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS FORMULA (DEMILITARIZED
ZONES)."

4. ALLUDING TO CARTER'S REMARKS ABOUT BEGIN, HE WARNED THAT IF
PEACE DEPENDS ON BEGIN'S CHANGING HIS THINKING, THIS
IMPLIES NEW FORM OF BLACKMAIL THE US WILL EMPLOY WITH THE
ARABS TO BE MORE 'MODERATE.' REFERRING TO "THE NEW
ELEMENTS OF THE US POSITION" (AFTER EARLIER CLAIMING
CARTER SAID NOTHING NEW), AL-KHULI CHARGED THAT CARTER'S
DECLARATIONS IMPLIED AMERICA "DOES NOT WANT A JUST PEACE."
MURPHY

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